NUNC COGNOSCO EX PARTE

TRENT UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

1411

Rossignol Rhymes

BY

PHIL H. MOORE

PUBLISHED BY
THE ROSSIGNOL PRESS
White Point Beach, N. S.

COPYRIGHT RESERVED

Thomas J. Bata Library
UNIVERSITY
ONTARIO

PS 8526 .066 R6

To Acadia,
The Land Of My Adoption

There is something of thee—as of me—
in this little book

152429

ROSSIGNOL

Of sunny France, the hardy Rossignol,
A voyageur of note, by kwedun* came
Up O-gum-keg-e-ok,† of Micmac fame,
Till from an oak-top, by a waterfall,
He spied vast lakes and purple ridges tall;
Then, in his birch canoe of slender frame,
At night he dared the waves:—they overcame
And hurried him to join the hosts of Gaul.

O, siren-natured, grey, Acadian sea!
So soft you sing and coax; then, snarl and lash!
Entice brave voyageurs,—your dangers veil,—
Then dash them on the boulders in the lee,—
(That sportive Glooscap‡ tossed to see you splash)—
Bold victims of a Circean nightingale.

*Bark canoe
†Mersey River
‡Mythical giant of the Micmacs

The Voice of the Forest

VOICES OF THE SPRUCE

When Vinland harboured first the Norsemans' prow,
The brooding spruce each hill did glorify:
They whispered in their yearning to the sky
And shadowed heathen dance or Christian vow.

With wisdom would the trees all men endow. . .
They heeded not! Straightway the ringing cry
Of greedy ax barked out. A crash! A sigh!
In vain had been the song of tossing bough.

Centuries passed. New day—and ancient night!
The spruces fell, their message fastly sealed,
Till stones that grind exceeding fine revealed
The pulp that holds the fibre of the light.
Thus paper came. . . the forest to appease,
And liberate the Voices of the Trees.

MESKUK M'TASKUM*

Ulgwedook† crawls in sinuous grace
'Tween billowy hills and bogs;
It is sleek and smooth with rippling spots
As it creeps around the logs.

Snakily slipping among the rocks,
Weaving around the snags,
It coils about the islets green,
And over the falls it sags.

Gorging itself in autumn and spring,
It will hiss and writhe and swell
And strangle a struggling lumber-jack
Or engulf a seeded dell.

In summer and winter it glides along,
Lazy, wicked and lean;
With appetite gone it will strike to kill,
Moodily serpentine.

Its tail in far Minegooskek,‡
It stretches its glistening length,
Till its foaming maw in the sea slime
Spews the prey of its sinister strength.

*Great Snake
†The Medway River
‡Third Lake on the Medway

A SPORT

The air is choked with scud; the wind doth fling
Its smoke athwart the vista of the sky
And pile menacing purple clouds on high,
While lightning forks 'mid thunder's battering;
The hailstones slash; your teeth are chattering;
To swamp your bark, the sea and gale may vie,
Nor pause if in their monstrous play you die:
'Tis then you are a sport if you can sing!

And can you whistle when the ducks have flown,
Or smile and carry on instead of rest,
And do yet better when you've done your best,
Or grin at grief that loads your pack like stone?

If wood and stream and play you fairly court,
And lug your share of duffle,—you're a sport!

A VERNAL PAINTING

A-twinkle gleam the birches through the green
And lacey raiment of a virgin spring;
Ephemera with giddy gauzy wing
Display their dance in mirrored pool serene;
The tinkle of the water, cool and clean,
Makes harmony with zephers as they sing
A love-song through the branches while they swing
The birdlings, fluffed and cosy neath their screen.

Florescent, peep from emerald couch of moss,
Shy violets, while aromatic scent
Of clover in God's sunshine, near the burn,
Intoxicates the bee, and shrubs emboss
The warm earth's bosom, flowing, and content
To mother lordly oak or humble fern.

THE CAMP FIREPLACE

A man's home is his castle, so 'tis said,
And even so does that entail his camp:
A log hut it may be, and rough and damp;
Split poles comprise the table, boughs for bed,—
But still all his: a stronghold overspread
By friendly trees and sun, and stars that lamp
Sly elfin knights whose wingéd steeds do ramp
And joust until the dawn doth snap the thread.

Fairies? But yes! And magic are the days!
The joyous battle with the wind and stream;
The flashing trout, the moose, the loons' weird scream
The storm! Then safe in shack by crackling blaze:
For Camp without a fireplace, warm and wise,
Is home without a mother's smiling eyes!

THE GAME I LOVE

They sing sweet songs of gray homes in the west,
And chant of sunset rich and lady fair,
Of autumn, spring, the sea and mountain air:—
Each thrums the tune that murmurs in his breast.

I, too, in song have ventured to attest
The virtue of my snugly cabined lair,
Where I am free from crowds and mundane care:—
But such is not the game I love the best.

I love the bull moose for the chase he gives,
And fat buck too, but will not track his doe:
(I pick the fruit but let the good tree grow).
When man may hunt 'tis then he surely lives.
I thank the Guide who guards the Ground above
For thrill and feast from that big game I love.

THE SPRITE OF SPRING

"I bid thee fly, not follow him who plods;
I prithee flout what custom bids thee do;
I claim thou shouldst not to old forms run true,
Nor cant and moan nor give thy rival odds;
Nor shouldst thou crave those condescending nods
The mighty toss the less, lest lesser, too,
Important grow, and potent, them eschew.
I beg thee importune more fulgent gods!"

Thus sang the Sprite of Spring upon my sill.
"Come," she cooed, "and play in the heather lush!
Great Pheobus smiles so bare thy head to health!
The Sun idolators—they did God's will
And worshipped all His works without a blush.
Come! Make thy prayer to me and share my wealth!"

THE RAPE OF THE FOREST

Virgin Forest, summer-draped,
Swelling contours, cool and green,
Mossy nooks and hidden springs,
Silky limbs but partly seen.

September moon, glowing full,
Soft and warm the forest sleeps;
Through jet shadows stealthily,
To the sleeper White Frost creeps.

September morn, flaming sun
Melts the glittering diamonds fair
Frost bequeathed: (but tawdry gems)
Forest blushes in despair.

Fated Forest, lurid, shamed,
Bedecks her limbs, all crimson-hued;
Dallies with rude Autumn Winds;—
Winter finds her withered,—nude.

Magic Forest! Her Karma worked,
Her sins are healed by vernal rain;
As cycle vast completes its turn,
To her God gives a soul again.

MY AUTUMN MISTRESS

O, gaudy wood, rouged and fragrant,
Sensual bid to primal males;
In mirror pools, like wanton vain,
You flaunt the hue that man regales.

My painted wood, thy perfume, color,
Urge and tempt me to thine arms;
All my senses, mind and instincts,
Seek immersion in thy charms.

A monster moose,—shaggy, deadly,—
In turn I lure with siren song;
Eat red meat by fire snapping;
Neath soft caress recline till dawn.

Ah, Godless wood,—flagrant, moody,—
(The lust assuaged, my spirits flag;)
Had my shot missed, and beast had gored me,
Laughing, you'd caress the stag!

NOVEMBER SNOW

A quiet, hurried rustling o'er the dale;
The eager trees are decking out the bride,
A-stripping off their raiment, thus to hide
Ripe Autumn's dusky contours, and regale
Stern Winter's austere vision, cold and pale.
When from his icy kingdom he will ride
To claim his own in arrogance and pride,
The hovering clouds will drape the bridal veil.

A-quiver, huddled Birches as they blanch,
With haste, disrobe; then, lordly Maples deign
Their crimson cloaks to throw; and Oak-tree stanch
Its tawny dress; nor Junipers refrain;
Save only Pine and Fir strip every branch:—
The Sun intrudes and lifts the veil again.

INDIAN GARDENS

Upon the storied green where clover blooms,
Hard by the cataract which has its head
In Rossignol, but makes its stony bed
In O-gum-keg-e-ok, then roars and booms
To the far ocean,—tall and proud there looms
A grove of ancient oaks that overspread
A Micmac graveyard where lie men once red
And gorgeous in their paint and eagle plumes.

The old guide drones out tales of mighty deeds
And wondrous bow-shots of the long dead braves:
Of how they built canoes, or moose could stalk,
Or asked the Spirit's blessing on the seeds;—
Then, how the pale-face customs filled the graves,
And how the oaks would judge could they but talk.

TROUTING

You don old clothes; with trusty rod go out
Upon the breezy stream, amid the rocks,
And there a fugitive from work and clocks,
You drop a fly to tempt and put to rout
Some doughty denizen who craves a bout
With silk and gut and rod and reel, and mocks
Your skill and gives you lightning starts and shocks:
A splash! A singing reel! You hook a trout!

You smile and sing; and then, in glee, you laugh!
And whistle as you dip a splendid fish;
Some get away, but still you cast and trill;
As full of joy and sun, the air you quaff,
You dwell upon fried trout in smoking dish:—
You load your creel,—in every trout a thrill!

THE FALLEN MONARCH

The dark spruce swamp, a blend of greens and grays,
A-shine with frost of autumn day new-born,
With scarlet maples flaming in the morn,
And crystal grass that in the sun displays
A thousand rainbow tints:—this scene portrays
No beauty to that noble beast, lovelorn,
Of hair, of hoofs, and huge palmated horn,
That stands and sniffs for more than he surveys.

A misty meadow by a mirrored pond,
And ice-ferns splayed in balsam-shadowed cove,
Invite a lurking hunter's eagle eyes.
Now, to the monster moose, in urging fond,
Comes wavering the mate-cry through the grove:—
He harks! And lured by siren call, he dies!

THE TRYST

The morning hails me with its fragrance deep:
No piercing winds nor whips of icy snow
Come hissing in my face and sting as though
To beat me to the ground in frosted sleep;
For now the air is balmy: zephers creep,
Seductive, up the hill and sweetly blow
Aromas of the field that make me glow
And wonder if I should a promise keep.

'Twas by a shadowed pool, our rendezvous,
Where last I saw my love in spangled dress
Of red and brown and gold; though no caress
Would she permit, nor yet one chance to woo,
But scoffed at every lure that I flung out,
I'll seek again my love—my speckled trout!

THE FIBRE OF A THOUSAND TONGUES

Reply to Robt. H. Davis' "Rape of the River."

The axe doth bark in deep majestic lane;
Its bite is keen as ripe spruce giants fall
To fill a growing need perpetual,—
The fibre of a thousand tongues to gain.
The evergreens, coniferous, thus reign
Supreme above all things industrial.
Then through the slash, in vigor young and tall,
Spear saplings, thick and of a lusty strain.

Autumnal drought doth parch the painted hills:
A careless match by khakied "sport" is flung. .
He flees the flames, unshriven and unhung. . .
A holocaust sweeps over swale and rills.

A poet weeps the rape of forest land;
In justice let him curse the hunter's brand.

CAMPING

If I were given a choice of throne or tent,—
The throne with all its jewels and rare gold,
Its purple hangings and proud courtiers, cold
And cunning in their schemes and blandishment,
Would lose its lure if breath of woodland scent
Should warmly fan my cheek; or hunter bold
Invite me to the hills where chums unfold
Their honest thoughts, with truth and wisdom blent.

No sultan with his oriental pomp,
Nor king, nor czar, nor chief of dusky tribe,
In harem, or his treasure vaults could find
A charm to win me from my hill and swamp,
Or sunny lake; nor could, with splendid bribe,
He buy, or barter for, my peace of mind.

THE PYTHON

Ulgwedook† crawls and sinuates between
The craggy hills, the meadows and the bogs;
It ripples smooth and sleek around the logs,
And weaving snakily amid the green
And slimy snags, it coils in pools, unclean
With cast up debris, rafting flies and frogs;
Then, hissing through the beaver dam, it fogs
The sunshine with an iridescent screen.

In spring and fall it gluts and gulps and swells
To monstrous size, voracious as a boa;
In drought it lurks beneath dark bank and reed.
From Minagooskek‡ through the hemlock dells
It writhes, to spew in sea-slime with a roar
Of foam, the prey of its primordal greed.

†Micmac Indian for Medway River, N. S.
‡Fourth Lake on the Medway River, N. S.

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS

With ever stronger sweep and swifter pace
The smooth black water draws by rock and brush,
And as before a storm there is a hush,
It gathers, without sound, for a mere space
Of time, its strength, and seems to pause and brace
Against the mighty pull of earth; then, flush,
It leaps with sullen roar and foaming rush
To meet the spurning cliffs athwart its race.

Upon the tortured stream we float; then, swoop
With breathless plunge to cleave the writhing waves
That clutch and toss our fragile bark at will,—
Or would, had not the steersman strength to dupe
The wild white torrent as it twists and raves;—
We glide, then, to a harbour calm and still.

THE RAPIDS

Insistent as the flight of time they pour
With never ceasing pulse,—a sparkling flood
That sings and toys with log or maple bud
In artful ease; they gently lap the shore,
Or gully it with vicious swirl and roar,
And glut themselves with pilfered leaves and mud,
And then, indeed, they thirst for human blood,
And strive to snatch a boatman's pole or oar.

With all their moods and vicious readiness
To turn to tragedy excursions up
Their lureful rills and sun-warmed, curving tides,
I love the rapids and their strong caress,
And blithely sip their proffered, brimming cup
As out upon the stream my kwedun* glides.

*Canoe

DRIFTING

A golden flash,—we loiter on the stream;—
A moment is permitted us to float,
Reflect, and revel in the blackbird's note
Which trills and warbles from the reeds a-teem
With airy wingéd things that hum and seem
Just singing in the joy of day. The rote
And the monotony of sound promote
Sweet drowsiness, and lull the mind to dream.

To drift awhile is heavenly delight;
A truce with duty and its toil and strife;
We feel the gentle current's pleasant urge;
But use and not abuse the river's might,
For there are rapids on the stream of life
That rush the flotsam to the briny surge.

THE SMUGGLERS' TRAIL

In olden times while running contraband,
The daring smugglers, arméd cap-à-pie,
Crept up in inky blackness from the sea,
Like giant turtles crawling to the land.
Upon their backs the plunder of the strand
Was silently conveyed o'er cliff and lea,—
Up tortuous trails, and hidden,—duty free,—
Beyond the grasp of edict or command.

The ancient trail is overgrown with weeds;
And tourists love to ramble where is cast,
On everlasting rocks beneath the moss
In petroglyphs, the story of dark deeds.
Deep scored by iron boot-heels of the past
Are many lines with here and there a Cross.

THE FRESHET

Twixt twilight of the winter and the dawn
Of spring, a lazy southern zepher blows
In idle roving over northern floes
And flutters past the forest dark to fawn
O'er pure white curve of hills by nature drawn
With grace to hold the mantle of the snows;
And thence on ice-bound stream a kiss bestows,
Impulsively, as though 'twere passion's pawn.

That melting kiss and spicy breath bestir
Vague tremors 'neath the river's rigid shroud;
Its pulses throb—it harkens to the plea
Of coaxing zephers, and though prisoner,
It bursts its bonds, and mightily endowed
With lust for life, it rushes to the sea.

A WINTER SUNRISE

All rosy from its cradle in the east,
The sun, reluctant, peeps at pallid hill,
At ice-bound river and the frozen rill
And spotless field, unscarred by bird or beast;
Askance it peers at sapphire valley fleeced
With snow, and nestled cot, and silent mill
That hibernating cowers in the chill.
Intense the cold;—the throb of life has ceased.

The huddled firs like brooding greybeards stand
And glower at the meagerness of men,
While crystal jewels on each birch display
The rainbows of a magic fairyland;—
The great Sun, glowing red, awakes and then,—
Leaps forth to flame its glory to the day!

THE STORM

A hush, then furtive tappings on the roof;
A sigh, as from a giant in his sleep;
A rumble, indistinct but vibrant, deep,
As if Jove's stallions with impatient hoof
Awaited but a signal, held aloof
From sheer stampede to crouch; then raging, leap
As whipping lightning crackles, and a sweep
Of cutting hailstones shreds the forest woof.

Wild discords crash their insult to my ears;
An instant I am fearful, trapped and bound,
Till infinite imaginings of Man,
Christ-dowered, lift me boldly from my fears.
The Storm is but a ferment and a sound,
A puny part in God's stupendous plan.

THE WATER-LILY

Swan-white and pure it floats with golden heart
Just opened to a sun-ray overbold
That seeks to pierce a loveliness too cold
In cloistered bud, but ripe for Cupid's dart
When first in flower, or to play its part
In spicing idle breezes, and unfold
Its riches that there may be pollen gold
Paletted for Dame Nature and her art.

Not for the joy of man alone it grows;
In distant ponds its stem, so colubrine,
And boated leaves give shelter for the fry;
It gives its honey to the bee, and blows
That gay ephemera may dance and dine;—
When plucked, still gives; then patiently, 'twill die.

OCTOBER MORN

The flesh tints of a virgin day, new-sprung
Like Venus from a wreath of mist, gleam there
Through ghosts of murky night, and fair
To see, they brighter glow while matins sung
By magic choristers of silver tongue
Tinkle and trill in belling chords as rare
As those that brook and pebbles sometime dare,
Or fairies on the bluebells may have rung.

The Day moves timidly to roseate lake
And stoops to touch its cool and placid face,
Then rising with the shyness of a fawn,
She shows a splendor that but One could make;
A masterpiece, sure of secluded place,
She dabbles in the diamonds of the dawn.

THE GRANITE BOULDER

O, craggy mass, deep-scarred by ancient trail,—
Before ye rested midst these clustered pines,
And slept in sun-flecked shadows with the vines
Festooning from the mossy nooks, and frail
Green ferns and lichens that conspire to veil
Thy rugged might, and deck the fairy shrines
In this cool grotto,—what were thy confines?
Didst thou, perchance, encumber arctic swale?

Mayhap a glacier with ponderous length
Conveyed thee here, and dropped thee in the melt,
As it succumbed before the solar heat.
'Twere fanciful to credit Glooscap's strength,
The Micmac giant, who neath hunger's welt
Did hurl thee at some monster for his meat.

LAKE ROSSIGNOL, NOVA SCOTIA

Aeons before the womb of myth and lore
Conceived that mystic, eagle-pluméd god
Called Glooscap on the trails where Micmac trod,
Lake Rossignol caressed its fronded shore.
High singing sea! With smile or frothy roar
You challenge one to dare with reel and rod,
Or wonder did once fishes walk the sod,—
Those protoplasmic denizens of yore.

Unchanged yet ever changing is thy face;
Grey, green or blue, the crinkles in each cove;
The wavelets that with zephers run a race
Are tempered by the thunderbolts of Jove.

A troglodite, entombed by urban wall,
Mine ear doth crave the song of Rossignol.

Cherchez La Femme

"PHILEEN"

No rags, nor bones, nor hanks of hair for mine!
My colleen rare has nought but temp'rament
And dacent cover for her sentiment;
No Kipling could describe her charm divine,
As wielding fishing-rod and silken line
She casts her bait with laugh and blandishment,
Or rages with discreet disparagement
That any fish could think she hath design!

She shure is Irish as a charlotte russe,
And Française as a spud; as smiling as
An April day and cold as hot July!
At fishing she could really play the Deuce
If once she hooked him,—as she surely has
The singer of this song,—caught on the fly.

A SONNET LADY

A sonnet, Lady, you ask me to write,
But give me as a subject one so fair
That with but modest art I hardly dare
To venture my poor rime or stanza light;
Nor can I do her justice with a flight
Of rich poetic fancy or a flair
Of genius worthy of such bob-tailed hair
And freckles like the stars on winter's night.

My dear, I never can your faith reward
Because of flashing smile and wondrous eyes
And dimples that bewitch me. I surmise
Less eager hand could strike more tuneful chord.
So I'll not try to sing in numbers sweet
The charm of ready wit and twinkling feet!

HEATHEN TO CHRISTIAN

I prayed for virtues and I found it vain.
I squandered leaden hours in black despair
Till urge for toil replaced an urge for prayer;
Then recognition stirred a groping brain.
Did I this mote of eminence attain,
This virtue called success,—through Heaven's care
Invoked by me? Or was it thou didst dare
To pray for one unworthy of such gain?

I know, Sweetheart, 'twas thou, with selfless love
Who pled my cause and sowed the golden seeds.
I thank thee! And sensing thy urgent needs
Will importune for thee, the gods above:
As twixt thy love and duty thou art torn,
Jove grant thee patience till thine hour is born!

WOLVES

All sleek and hungry-eyed they haunt the trail
Of Mammon's votaries. Svelt and disguised
As things of beauty, to be idolized,
Each would the other's feebleness assail.
Hunting in packs, in pairs, does not entail
Stern ethics nor self being sacrificed
For one who may be weak and agonized
By Fate's rude flogging of a frame too frail.

Once down she's done. The pack will eat her up!
They'll steal her mate and kill her sucking whelp.
Indeed they'll kill their own nor heed its yelp,
Must one but choose between her lust and pup.
The strong survive, at last to stagger South,
With bleak hot eyes and ashes in the mouth!

THE FLAME OF NORWAY

In storied fiord the sea yet moans its woe,
While conifers still huddle in the cold
And brood like greybeards grown so very old
That seasons are but seconds as they go.
Great Thor yet hurls his bolts from flashing bow;
His thunder rolls from vale to mountain bold,
Till penitent he turns the hills to gold
And flings Aurora's spears above the snow!

O, Scandinavia of mystic lore!
Canst trust thy Royalty to foreign lands?
One Princess did but now elude my hands
To dance like Northern Lights that dart and soar.
Perchance, in form of Venus, to entice,
She's but a roving wisp of fire and ice—?

MEMORY

An August night. An atmosphere of plush;
A tree-toad trilling some old jubilee;
A cloud-flecked lake and soft swamp melody;
A stealthy, prying breeze and then a hush.
I sat enthralled, my blankets in the lush
Sweet meadow grass beneath an ancient tree
Near Micmac cairn that loomed in mystery,
While spirits seemed to flit through brake and rush.

I felt a presence; perfume fanned my face;
A tremor shook me as with fright or love—
A wraith or lass was hovering above—
I have a memory of fire and lace—
A fluttered hand that sprinkled me with stars—
A velvet kiss 'neath magic lunar bars—!

THE BURNING GLACIER

Formed in the press of Nature's fickle mold,
At altitudes sublime and purely rare
And yearning for the valley's balmy air,
A virgin glacier would flee the cold;
Sired by the frost as Alpine thunder rolled,
And mothered by the swirling clouds that dare
To seek great heights,—it glitters keen and fair
And burns and chills and melts at last to gold.

So thus an iridescent maid I know,
As cool as flaming ice in azure globe;
Her aura drapes her as a convent robe,
While stars blaze down upon her perfect snow.
I prayed the frosted sphere wherein she dwelt
Would cool my ardor ere she too should melt.

DID EVER YOU STAND BY A BROOK

Did ever you stand by a brook and dream
And watch it sweep, resistless, to the sea?
Did wanton thoughts then wander wide and free,
Intrigued by the bold impulse of the stream?
Did brown or blue or grey eyes ever seem
To smile to you, or dare to make a plea
From out the river's foam,—then, turn and flee,
Tossing to you a mere reflected beam?

Did ever you, without a seemly blush,
Launch forth your heart upon the droning tide,
Like some winged ship outbound to India's shore,
(Too deeply laden for its seaward rush)
Destined to trade for jewels of a bride
And bring him back whom you did once adore?

THE SUB-DEB

O, gangling miss, with all your coltish ways,
Your flying nut-brown mane and flashing smile,
Do you but question me with studied guile,
Or does my wisdom really you amaze?
Is it, then, as it seems, your mind but plays,
Bequeathing light and music all the while,
Without a thought of future, or of style,
As, slender-limbed, you dance through joyful days?

O, little maid, with all your boyish grace,
You have potentialities of Eve,
And Egypt's Queen for whom a Caesar dies.
Do you not sense the power of your place?
You behold a sage you may not believe,
While I see mighty nations in your eyes.

GIRL OF MY HEART

Girl of my heart! Peruse this wishful line
That would in cadence rare thy virtue sing,
If my poor pen could bell the tones that ring
Inspired, but mute, before thy stars divine!
Girl of my thoughts! Let all your smiles be mine,
Or hoard them rather till wise Kismet fling
Me prostrate at thy feet; and were I king
The sight of thee would turn my head like wine.

Girl of my dreams! Kneel by thy snowy bed
And say a little prayer for one who waits,
Dogged by such pain that he but stands aghast
And wonders if 'twere harder to be bled
On Calvary, deserted by one's mates. . .
O, Girl of me! May God consent at last!

STARRY EYES

I dreamed a dream one night long, long ago,
And since that wondrous vision every day
Hath seemed a month in span. I am distrait
And sad or joyous, which, I do not know.
'Twas of a maid smiling in the fire's glow
I dreamt. What was she like? I cannot say,
Though ravishing she was with eyes blue-grey.
(Mayhap she 'phoned me that her eyes were so).

When maid thus dazzles what am I to do?
Demand that she switch off her twinkling lamps
Or turn them on another while she vamps?
But nay! My brother might be blinded too.
I'd gladly risk my sight as sacrifice
Could I but plumb, soul-deep, her starry eyes.

CONSCIENCE

Yea, Maiden, forsooth I would forget thee;
I would, that is, could I but serve the hand
That dryly bids me follow its demand;
'Tis conscience beckoning. Would I were free!
Must that wench always dog so jealously
My ev'ry thought, and sternly, coldly brand
Each impulse to indulge a passion grand
As something of deceit and low degree?

I crave thee, dear: thy breasts, thy lips, thy laughter,
Because thy smile is more to me than gold
Or worldly fame that may be bought and sold. . .
With thee I sing; who knows of the hereafter?
Does God then pause to score our happy sighs
As He commands the marching of the skies?

TO THE HOSPITABLE FRANCES STARR

Gliding—from the upland scent of pines;
Shooting—down to salty atmosphere;
Riding—through the rolling rounded hills;
Looting—summer weather of its lure.

Dipping—in the curling creamy foam;
Glazing—as it licks the crispy sands;
Dripping—in the sun-soaked summer winds;
Lazing—far from turmoil of the towns.

Rousing—you are lulled by singing surf;
Gleaming—in the starlight's soft caress;
Drowsing—while around you and above,
Beaming—is the Star of Graciousness.

A SONG

A tinkle of music
Swept through the branches
Of oak-trees which haloed
The lake's shadowed shore.

Illusive it wakened
Deep chords of the forest
Which sagged unattuned
To such lyrics before.

The music though faded
Like a fire-fly's gleam
Has left me for comfort
The trail of a dream.

War

TO THE WAR POETS

All through the fevered days of Mons and Marne,
While Hunnish hordes urged forward under lash,
Ripped wide and tore our lines with shock and gash,
And stately fort succumbed as humble barn,
And turgid stream dyed red both earth and tarn,—
Stout Allied hearts, unwavered by the crash,
Right doggedly delivered slash for slash,
Backed by up white-faced women,—knitting yarn.

Most famous heroes issued from the fray,
Well honored by *Le Croix* or churchyard chime:—
And none deserve our plaudits more than they
For stanchly winning through the gore and grime;—
But spare for those such laurels as you may,
Who wrought from sordid strife a gorgeous rhyme.

THE PATHOS OF PEACE

As the boom of the guns on the battle line
And the shout of victorious troops
Give way to the fluttering Dove of Peace
And retreat of Kaiser's dupes,
Then,—
A shuddering sigh floats up to the sky,
The national spirit droops.

As the paling panoply of Peace
Usurps the pageant of War
And exaltation of will to win
Departs from the conqueror,
Then,—
We count up the cost and friends we have lost;
The burden chafes us raw.

The sonless mother and loverless maid
The widow and cripple sway
Under a load almost too great
For feeble strength to weigh;
But,—
Such goal to attain, they'd offer again
The score of Mars to pay.

BALM O' GILEAD

What of the dam of heroic son?
(The lad that was shot in France?)
You note with her sorrow an air of pride,
A gleam of joy in her glance.

What of the sire of ministering nurse?
(The Sister that nursed too near?)
He shows you a medal, sent from there,
With hardly a plaint or tear.

What of the widow of tender years?
(Of the Ace in the Flying Squad?)
"He killed a lot of Boches, first,"
She boasts with prideful nod.

What of the parents bereft of child?
(Perhaps two of surpassing charm?)
'Twas dreaded plague,—no glory theirs,—
Dear God! where is thy balm?

SOCKS

A lonely shepherd and two faithful dogs
Three thousand sheep were herding through the sage;
The fragrant fodder making pasturage
Upon the Badlands, while the purple fogs
Of evening swirled by painted butte and bogs.
Ten thousand acres gave its heritage
That wool might grow and honest men might wage,
Well-shod, a war against the Prussian hogs.

A thousand times ten thousand needles flew
As eager women knit the wool to shape
The tired feet that trampled Flanders mud,
While urging back, to sty, the porcine crew:—
A billion lousey socks helped stop the rape,—
Plain, dirty socks, most proudly stained with blood.

SHIPS OF PEACE

Beneath the sea the red fires suck and snore,
And sweating men are giving half their all
To vitalize these monsters that enthrall
The souls that serve, that souls be saved from war.
Above the sea the wind or guns may roar,
And sleepless men upon the bridge will call
Commands in steady voice through smoke or squall,
That foe afloat may quail as those ashore.

Now war is done, if for but a brief span,
And men-o'-war address society;
The blast of shotted gun perforce shall cease,
And Tar will sport with rum and courtesan.
Yet force still lurks behind the gaiety,
For ships of war are ships that make the peace.

The Sea

THE FISHERMAN

She was born of the woods and salty wind,
Nursed as the sea's own spawn,
Sailed by the sons of the womankind
That love a sailor's brawn.

CHORUS—Then blow ye down the long blue lane,
And blow ye home from sea;
Through Arctic snow and tropic rain,
Our prayers will follow thee.

Then after the toil on the teeming Banks,
And each schooner has found her place
Snug in the harbour from Winter's pranks,
Somebody whispers: "A Race!"

CHORUS

So dressing their wings for sport so keen
They play as hard as they toil,
And sail such a race as never was seen:
They make the old ocean boil!

CHORUS

For fish or a frolic they're ready to sail:
It's all within their ken;
For pleasure or profit they wet a rail,
But take their toll in men.

Then blow ye down the long blue lane,
And blow ye home from sea,
But since the race off Scotia's main,
There's one less lad for thee.

THE SURF RIDER

Outside the breakers, far beyond the lee,
I rest and rock within my kwedun* brave,
And nod to lullaby of strumming wave
That harps on golden strands a song of sea;
Combers are dancing as they list, and free
To toss their saucy ruffs on high and lave
The sweet west wind that seems their lips to crave,
And blows them silver bubbles in its glee.

The eager ocean urges me to play;
It jostles as it tempts me to a ride;
I turn my kwedun, dart and catch the stride
Of reeling wave, then mount and sail away!
The wine of life is of my giddy flight;
I skim the surf and, as a gull,—alight!

*Canoe

ROCKAWAY BEACH IN JANUARY

I long for salty winds and waters blue,
And cannot think the friendly summer sand
Is aught but velvet strip 'twixt sea and land
That couched me in July to sea-gull's mew.
'Tis thus, a Troglodyte, the coast I woo,
And fly my cave, and dare Boreas' hand,
And list with joy the music of the strand
Until a snarling sea growls into view.

The music changes to a soulless dirge;
I glimpse a monster of white claw and tusk
Which rushes at the beach from out the dusk;
A scaly beach that hisses at each surge. . .
Are these Leviathans at war or play?
They seem absorbed. . I think I'll steal away!

CHANTEY OF THE GRAND BANKS

Of robins and larks the poets may glee,
Of chickens and piping vamps,
The birds of a feather that flock together,
And wiggle and wink their lamps.
I'd much rather see than be a gull,
But gulls are the birds for me.

CHORUS—Yo Ho! ye lubbers! Get over the rail!
The fisherman's going to sea;
And that's the place for a sailorman,
And that is what I be!

The lubbers may praise and all agree
That the "trot" is a great delight;
To grab her and waddle, and then do a toddle
Is to 'em a beautiful sight.
I'd much rather ride than be a wave,
But waves are the jazz for me!

CHORUS

The hunters may hunt the woods so free,
And guzzle their tough moose steak;
Or trap the red otter in calm fresh water,
Or paddle about a lake.
I'd much rather catch than be a fish,
But fish is the game for me!

CHORUS

CHANTEY OF THE GRAND BANKS (*Cont.*)

Of music I've heard away in the lee
The chimes of the churches ring;
And brazen before us I've seen a big chorus
Kick up in the air and sing.
I'd much rather feel than be a gale,
But a gale is the song for me!

CHORUS

You can race your horses of high degree,
Your autos and aeroplanes,
Or watch men muddle through mud and puddle,
And panting run down the lanes.
I'd much rather ship than be a ship,
But ships make the race for me!

CHORUS—Yo Ho! ye lubbers! Get over the rail!
The fisherman's going to sea;
And that's the place for a sailorman,
And that is what I be!

THE HURRICANE

It hoards with Hunnish stealth a lethal blast;
Betrays no secret of its vicious plan;
With craft awaits "der Tag" when careless man
Somnambulant in flaccid calm will cast
His net to seaward, far beyond the last,
And fails the azure heavens then to scan,
Nor in the north to see the darkling van
Of clouds.—It strikes! And Nature stands aghast!

A rush of wind, then, stinging hail will smite
The land, while tortured sea and driving mist
Assault stout oaken bark and sweep the deck.
The typhoon vaunts its ego, vents its spite;—
Consumes itself with savage howl and twist
And leaves a wake of death and tragic wreck.

SURF

A cinema of brine, and cadenced rune,
Replete the soot-dimmed eye and yearning ear,
That winter toil in teeming towns, and drear
Bread-winning tasks have dulled to lesser tune.
As into view unfolds the strand and dune,
The marches of the tide, and sea cliffs, sheer
And dark, above refulgent breakers clear
As beryl,—the scene bequeaths a magic boon.

The salt-touched air, as wine, bestirs the blood;
And waves, refluent in their serried race,
Pounce on the rocks with frothy, creaming crest,
And lave minute crustaceans with a flood
That flags the fronded rock-weeds' languid grace:—
The restlessness and murmur giveth rest.

UPON DRIVING AN AUTO AMONG THE ICE-BOUND FISHING VESSELS ON THE LA HAVE RIVER

Hibernal, ice-locked in an haven deep,
A vessel dreams of miracles: of ship
Hard pressed and tossed by sea and gale that strip
Her spars; half foundered from wild waves that sweep
The decks, and crew in famished, frosted sleep,—
Lashed helpless by the hailstorm's cruel whip;—
She staggered on,—a wreck,—unsteered, to slip
At last through shoals, and safe to harbor creep.

Of phantom ships, she dreamed, and burning ice;
Leviathans that stalked her many days,
To pass in stink of oil and scorching souls,
As lucky depth-charge made them pay the price;—
And then, a car she sees, in wide amaze,
That over land or water swiftly rolls!

THE BEACH IN WINTER

I hear deep music roll, now low, now strong,
So wend my way by shuttered cot and store
That somnolent beseem to sigh and snore;
Or doth a breeze but seek the summer throng,
And mourn the laughing children of the long
Bright days of August on the empty shore?
Conjecturing I hasten to explore
The welling diapason of the song.

Then lo! I come upon neglected friends!
A crescent beach and singing boist'rous tide,
With waves high-arched and sand whorls in a game
That starting with creation never ends. . . .
(A bit more hair upon my pampered hide,
And winter sea and summer look the same.)

THE LAUNCHING OF THE BLUENOSE

A wondrous ship was looming through the haze,
New-carved from noble timber of the west
That artisans of Acady their best
Had given to shape a craft that would amaze
The Yankee boat, which seeks in autumn days
To hold the Herald Cup that should not rest
In foreign lands. Hawk-like with haughty crest,
She poised, all sleek and black, upon the ways.

While hammers tapped the blocks beneath her side,
And people waited breathless, tense and hushed,
The ocean, calm, still crooned its age-old song;
Then, "Trip the shore!" the master builder cried.
The bottle cracked, and toward the sea she rushed;
And with her invocations of the throng!

THE DERELICT

"How, then, did I become a wreck, you ask?
It's this way, Boss. My compass pointed West
Instead of No'th; my charts were of the best,
But some swab handed me a silver flask:
It weren't no rotten rum from out a cask. . .
And I read three for eight. . . you know the rest;
It weren't my fault, for she—he were my guest,
And manners, Sir, is half a Captain's task.
I struck a hidden bar; it aint no lie,
Boss; bars—they be for bums like me, or prince;
And many is the blind bar I've struck since. .
The whole world's wrong, and that's my alibi."

And sodden, it drifts in the fog to fade,
A helpless menace in the tracks of trade.

REINCARNATION

The cable snaps:—a wrenched soul cries aloud,
"She's lost!" Demonic seas with clutch and jeer
Reclaim the ship, and as upon a bier
Of brine, impel her helpless, once so proud,
To hungry ledges, black and beetle-browed.
She strikes! Then, gray and monstrous waves uprear
Their ghastly foaming crests, and pounce and tear,
And leave but oaken bones and tangled shroud.

With flags a-flying in a summer breeze,
A virgin bark is poised for maiden flight,
Resplendent in her paint and sweeping curves;—
The bottle cracks!—Then swift, she glides with ease,
And launches with a nodding bow polite,—
As though an old acquaintance she observes.

A POET BY THE SEA

A poet contemplates while tongues of tide
Enwreathe and lap his shining pedestal
With gleaming froth; and after mystical
Meanderings and whisperings that chide
The barring crags, reluctantly they slide
To vast and jeweled depths, so prodigal
That Neptune's daughters, holding festival,
Are loath to leave their kingly father's side.

Are poets' songs but little waves that run—
Forever seeking a more lofty plane:
Each surging thought to score a higher mark
Upon the cliffs;—thence, leaving in the sun
A few pure drops of beauty that are fain
To fly as rainbowed mist through Heaven's arc?

THE PLAINT OF THE MAYFLOWER

I have no hope, I feel no longer proud.
Through snow and gale I've bounded out to sea
And shouldered foaming crests right honestly;
Full fares my only thought, and never cowed
By rain or sleet or fog or ice or cloud;
With verve I faced my task and merrily,
To show the world how fishing ought to be,
As deep winds laughed and thrummed my singing shroud.

They promised me a chance to win the cup
If I could earn by toil a rightful place,
Sustaining all traditions of the fleet:—
And now I'm barred! Do I not measure up?
I've done my work, and still I may not race!
(Perchance "Bluenoses" indicate cold feet).

THE CLIPPER

The Shenandoah could show her saucy heel
To any ship that on the sea might dwell.
Rounding Cape Horn a boy from maintop fell;
I leaped to grasp from calloused hands the wheel.
"Avast!" bawled Captain Jim with heave and reel;
"What? Back my yards in this godblasted swell?
Not much! Besides it's warmer down in hell.
You touch a spoke, I'll haul you 'neath my keel!"

Now, eighty days from Sandy Hook "was great!"
Quoth Captain Jim, and gave his pants a hitch:
"We clewed no goddam sail from Horn to Gate;
With fresh winds I can damned well sail the bitch!"

As each trip ended, and the dock I trod,
I moored me tighter to the Grace o' God.

Burlesque

PAN-DEAN SONG

Praise God for this bright pannikin,—
('Tis holy, you'll agree;)
As panacea for burning tin,
You steam the grub, you see.

Panada made in such a dish
Will pander to his taste;
Or rice potatoes, if you wish,
In panegyric haste.

This pan is good for more than that
When panned behind the scene,—
If he won't buy you a new hat,
Just pan him on the bean!

SOVIET-CATABASIS

Back to the simple Carlovingian
We fain would go. Yea, even that far back
When love was free and land and meat and sack
Were in abundance for the stronger man.
Yet Charlemagne had laws—a cursed plan—
That curbed and taxed and taught, nor did they lack
Much irksome discipline. 'Twere freer pack
In dynasty of Merovingian.

But wait! We find that there was Salic law!
So we must search e'en farther in the past
For our ideal—a life sans work or flaw;—
The Caesars? Nay! And Egypt's toil was vast!—

For law we'd choose a club, and riotous
With glee, we'd join old Pithecanthropus!

REINCARNATION

They tell me once I thrummed a serenade
To royal Greeks; and then before that time
With hairy legs and pointed ears, a rime
I piped upon the flute of Pan; then brayed
My song, as Pithecanthropus arrayed,
While tripping ape-girls of that Java clime
Evolved the demi-tasse; and in the slime
Of Preterozoic I may have played.

Now, if in other lives I lived as me,
A lot of bad went with my little good;
And if my music, quavering, then stood
No truer toned than now, it should not be!
I may have played the king, or played the deuce:—
But wish no lives on me,—what is the use?

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN IN THE WOODS

A Scottish guide took Abe on his first trip.
'Twas new to Abe: the stream, the trout they caught;
And when his flies and line, so dearly bought,
Festooned the trees, he hung his frugal lip;
Hence when to pay Guide Sandy he did dip
Into his buttoned pocket, he then sought
To hold out for the gear he lost, and taught
The canny guide not to expect a tip.

That eve did Sandy put Sport Abe in clover.
He fed him he-brew punch not brewed for girls;
'Twas free, so Abie's scalp grew brand new curls;
Then Sandy asked him out and tipped him over!
"O, safe me, blease!" yelled Abe; "here's ten for you!'
'Twas thus a Jew tipped Scot, and Scot tipped Jew!

PLANE JO KOSE THE GIDE OF ROSSIGNAW

I'm plane Jo Kose, the Gide of Rossignaw,
As ignorant as all good gides should be,
With skin the tuffest that you ever see,
And roll me own and take a drink and chaw.

I gides the sport, and may-be-so his squaw,
Though Emmy, that's the gurl what married me,
Finds nothin' nice in women on a spree;
But I like human nature in the raw!

It's grate to hear them sports discribe their speed
At makin' dough or winnin' 'em a lass;
To hear 'em tell it none moves in their class,
Though most look like thay's somewhat gone to seed;
But when thay tries to uplift me, I hide
For them as lifts should be above a gide!

ERIN GO BRAGH

There is a land beyont the ocean blue
Where fields sprout sweeter grass for Bossy's cud,
And hens and pigs can delve in richer mud
Than ever spattered on an English shoe;
And shure I am that faeries are there too,
And shamrock, and colleen, and primrose bud,
And paddies, and shillalahs, and red blood
To sphill for ony cause that might be thrue.

And now she's free with nought to scrap about!
Those bog-boys have been framing up the Dail!
There'll be no chanct to twist the Lion's tail
Or give an Ulster dude a friendly clout. . . .
No more at landlord's head he'll toss a brick. . .
Ould Ireland is dead! . . Long live the Mick!

THE OWLS' NEST

A rum-red moon glowed pendant from the breast
Of warm, portentous, midnight western sky;
The pines swayed sleepily with nod and sigh,
And silver lake the shadowed shore caressed.

An eerie wooded isle looms in the west,
Its quiet shades no mischief prophesy;
But mark those saucy stars! Each winks an eye!
Can that still grove conceal a night bird's nest?

Forsooth, a yodle weird: "To-who. . .? To-who. .?"
Calls from that isle, and echoes all about. . . .
Quick! Hide the chickens for the owls are out!
That cry, it fascinates: "To-you. . ! To-you. .!"
To this snug nest all wise owls know the route
For there they perch in pairs: "To-woo. .! To-hoot!"

TO MY LADY'S 'IGHBROW

O, palpitating flow of Modern Thought
That emanates from out my Lady's mind,
That precludes vulgar housework and the grind
Of raising little kiddies to be taught;—
Why only in the female are you wrought?
Are masculine conceptions, then, so blind
That schemes for shirking work are disinclined
To take root in my brain, though much besought?

Must one from séance drear to lecture roam
To see a Bolsheviki chanticleer
Defy the world, and on the rostrum foam;
Then rush to hear some atheistic sneer?
Why not then let the Uplift start at home;
Replace Hot-air with Normal Atmosphere?

LO! THE POOR ARTIST

When I consider how my paint is spent
Portraying limply Nature's mighty store
Of scintillating beauties, I deplore
That merely slinging paint has been my bent.
O, would I had the skill and the intent
To make my mark in words,—a mighty score
Of which is always free,—and rhymes galore.
(Still sweet-tongued bards seem somewhat indigent.)

I daub my thoughts upon a canvas blank
And strive to hold inspired tension high.
With but four primary colors it is wrong
To hope for shades of meaning that can rank
With poets' flights, and words that versify;—
(And yet HE sells his effort for a song.)

FRACTURED RESOLUTIONS

As the New Year waxes and the Old Year wanes,
And a memory of war is all that remains,
Exit the Eagle and enter the Dove,
And there is peace and plenty and brotherly love;
You feel so grateful, unctious and good,
That you renounce all sins that a mortal could.

You cut out cigars and the cigarette;
You by-pass the cocktails and other things wet;
You amputate habits of boastful talk;
Instead of a taxi, resolve to walk;
Cast no sly glances at twinkling silk;
And instead of lobster,—plain crackers and milk.

Then swelled all up with righteous pride
Amazed at your strength of mind, you tried
To tell your friends what they should do
To be as saintly and temperate too.
And while trying your best for a Godly "rep."
In gazing aloft, don't watch your step.

As the new ideas wane and the old ones wax,
Your overstrained morals begin to relax;
Exit the bluster, and enters quite humble
The thought that a fellow might take a tumble;—
With plenty of love and peace as well,
You wake to the fact that,—*You're human as hell!*

INSTINCT

A hawk soars searchingly, serene,
In sunlight, floating emptily;
His craw is flat, his sight is keen,—
He waits his chance thus airily.
A rabbit darts athwart a fen;
A shadow flits menacingly;
He pops into a sheltering glen;—
The hawk swoops upward haughtily.
A wolf trots slanting up the wind,
His eyes a-hunting glowingly;
Though unassailed by scent of hind,
He feels a meal right knowingly.
A deer curled neath a hackmatack,
Her steel legs tensed suspiciously,
With nose to wind and ears a-back;
She springs and runs propitiously.
A spotted trout glides to a shoal,
His luncheon seeks portendingly;
From minnow plump to take his toll,
He'll sun himself pretendingly.
A school of minnow,—foxy fish,—
Play and feed invitingly;
They thwart the trout's voracious wish,
By shoreward darts,—most slightingly.
A Goodwife sits and sews a seam;
It's spring,—her Man distinctively
Takes down his rod, begins to scheme;—
She packs his bag instinctively.

I SOLD MY DOG

The sweetness cloyed, so to forego the sweet
I needs must school my senses, long caressed
And pampered by true love and greatly blest,
To spurn those joys of which they were replete.
I scorned the condiment and fain would cheat
That thrilling titillation of the breast—
That gratifying something which possessed
My days and lavished roses at my feet.

I hunger now. The path winds steep and rough.
I miss the gentle step and patient smile
And honest eyes that loved nor ventured guile
Though oft did I provokingly rebuff.
Restore to me the hours so rich in joy
And I will sip the sweet and crave the cloy.

IN FLORIDA

The Cracker Girl, or so it's told to me,
Is trained to hike before she learns to ride
In auto cars, lest accident betide
And she be late for breakfast or to tea.
All honor hers! And canny though she be
She, too, must learn to swim to save her pride
Lest while canoeing her escort should chide
Her with too little faith to walk the sea.
Now if all girls could paddle a canoe,
(And every girl should learn it, old or young)
This song need never, *ever* have been sung,
As all the boats have paddles built for two.
So learn to paddle home those Tête-à-têters
And you wont have to swim among the 'gators!

A LASSIE LOVES THE SAILORS

A lassie loves the sailors, you'll agree,
And sailors catch her eye on land or ship.
If she (the latter) makes a little slip
It is because she wished to go to sea.
'Tis curious how ships and girls are free
To lure a man to make the maiden trip,
And if, perchance, her sails should get a rip,
Why she (the former) tries to make the lee.
A ship, or girl, a sailor thinks a gem,
So now I make my point extremely plain;
Though girlies like the hazards of the main,
It takes a sailor's hand to handle them.
So boys just play at being nautical
And capture both the good and naughty gal!

CANOEING IN FLORIDA

Old Pithecanthropus was wont to take
His girl a-boating perched upon a log;
And later men, less hirsute, used a dog
To glide o'er glacier or frozen lake.
Then buggy-riding with the village rake
Made every girl start flirting for a jog.
The tandem bike set chaperones agog
Till autos came and took the blooming cake!
Now girls can walk, and parking sometimes bores,
So boys must find another trick that's new.
I wonder they don't launch a bright canoe
And paddle them along the tropic shores.
But how can they then try canoedlin'
With no canoes to thus canoedle in?

LENINE-TROTSKY ETC.

A gray ape leers with sly irreverent grin,
'Mid sighing fronds of a once royal palm;
Secure he feels in storm or sunny calm
For he sits loftier than all his kin.
The tallest perch and toughest, hairy skin,
The biggest mouth, has he, and longest arm
To pick a cocoanut to eat, or harm
A monk that might essay his tree to shin.

So there he squats and shakes his borrowed throne,
While bodies of still grinning apes adorn
The ground among the broken "nuts" forlorn:
In all the grove they hail him Boss—alone!
On white man's axe this monk doth never dwell,
Nor how the tree will fall in spite of Hell!

AND THERE YOU ARE!

She said I did not love her any more:
That I was mostly brute, and the small part
Of man about me had no sense of art;
And then she cried and pointed to the door!
I did not wish to go but I felt sore,
And so with halting steps I made a start
As if to leave her, though with heavy heart
Beneath the air of injury she wore.

Though ousted I'd not done a single thing.
I'd simply said she ought to curl her hair,
And "Mary Smith is quite a pretty lass."
"If any girls, why not my praises sing?"
She archly asked with deprecating air;
And then I told her to look in the glass!

REPLY TO JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

"What is my malady?" a scribe demands:
And then he boasts that he still loves his wife,
And eighteen married years of worldly strife
Cool not an ardor that unchallenged stands.
He claims to thrill at touch of practised hands,
(The same old digits that direct his life,
Or loot the till when shopping tours are rife)
And swears he chafes not at the marriage bands.

He Lawrence finds, and Anderson, too free;
A devil's hatch, "The Triumph of the Egg."—
So, Egotist, you wonder if 'tis plague?
I diagnose your case: Pomposity!
Unadvertised, some others also live
By grace of patient wives, superlative.

TO BYNG OF VIMY

Not Vimy, General, that made you great—
'Twas you who made that riddled ridge redound
To strategy acclaimed the world around,
While British guns with Huns did arbitrate.
'Tis not your nerve we would commemorate,
For song and story, British grit, resound,
And Tommies at the front were ever found.
(They also served who had to stand and wait).

I make this gesture to your steady smile:—
When sense of duty to the State each day
Demands its pound of flesh, you laugh and pay,
And meet the folk at every door and stile.
When they right in your face your praises sing,
I'll bet you'd rather hear the bullets, Byng!

A FLAPPER FLOPPED

A flapper flapped before chicks more mature.
She ruffed her downy plumes and clucked a boast
That she was tough, and capons she could roast
As well as hens, or game-cocks slyly lure.
She clucked a risqué song with smile demure,
And claimed her soul was on a downhill coast
Where chicken livers *en brochette* are toast
For one who fancies nothing true and pure.

She chirped a ribald lay of china eggs,
And how she'd feed the hatch a rubber worm;
'Twas all dark meat that graced her gamey form,
And foxy jazz was brooded by her legs.
Strutting her lines, her own eyes fairly popped!
She gulped two drinks, and then the flapper floppe

HUNGER

No poet should owe fealty to flesh;
Although he lives not long enough to sing
A song whose tones around the sphere may ring,
He cannot fish to eat with rainbow mesh.
Suppose a bark too frail for windward thresh,
With anchor up it still might tidings bring
To some lee cove. They also serve who fling
Aloft one haunting note, unhawked and fresh.

The work that sucked my brain and sapped my brawn,
For which I looted stars and pearly dawn
And clover-scented nights, and strove and prayed,
They seldom print, and I am little paid.
Mad God my thirst it need not be allayed!
Would that my hungry vitals could be drawn!

GREEN-ITCH VILLAGE

I've found a pirate town just of my heart
Where artists live, and love, and bob, and paint,
And strive,—quite unaffected by the taint
Of sordid patrons of the common mart:
Of Green-itch Village, then, I would impart
Some secrets of its lairs and customs quaint.
They lave in the same tub, without complaint,
The salad and themselves, and that's high art!

They daub and draw their breath, and drape the ear,
Inhale spaghetti and the cigarette,
Sleep three a-bed for warmth and atmosphere,
And never *have* bowed to convention yet. . .
A sketch, a cot,—compose a studio,
And suckers come and suckers wiser,—go!

AFTER READING SHAKESPEARE'S 154TH SONNET

Dan Cupid long ago lay fast asleep,
And left exposed his heart-inflaming brand,
While maids that knew but pure chaste lives to keep
Went laughing by. But in her lily hand
The boldest hesitated,—grasped the torch
That legions of the flapper world had warmed;
Unmindful that a tiny spark might scorch,
She hoped to play with fire and go unharmed.

She tried to quench this brand of sleeping Prince
In cooling moss-curbed well of shady place.
The well blazed high before Love's fiery grace,
And, heated, has been burning ever since.
(She plunged it in the well to see it smoke,
And many lovers, later, saw the joke!)

CASH

A moi! thou filthy cash and redolent!
A moi! thou spotted lucre that the mob
Begrimes itself to snatch, nor spurns a daub
Of gore on thee, and knows thee eloquent,
If cleaner notes are shy for increment.
I need thee, want thee, but deign not to rob
Or mulct my friend, and bear his curse and sob;
I want thee fair, and nothing to repent.

With all thy sins and faults I love thy skill
At easing ways that otherwise are hard,
And shaping keys for locks on every door
That leads to knowledge or to joy and thrill;
If I for ay could win thy fond regard,
I'd spend thee as wert never spent before.

Yuletide

OFF WITH THE OLD AND ON WITH THE NEW

Old Year

Begone! thou shabby wench of aged mien!
Dost think by yellow grin and wrinkled lear
To keep me faithful yet another year,—
And thou an arid waste, and cold and lean?
Begone! I say. In truth, I am less keen
For thee, and daily more inclined to sneer
As I recall how thou didst domineer
And boldly snatch from me with bribe unclean.

New Year

O, welcome! thou resplendent child of light!
Thou bearest gifts of promise and of fame.
With all my love and fortune I will woo
And win thy virgin heart, as of my right;
Then, soar with thee, transported by thy flame!—
I thus discard the Old and claim the New.

CHRISTMAS—1920

I greet thee, friend!—This birthday of the One
Who died that we might live and laugh and hail
In peace each soul we pass upon the trail
Is time to smile and stand beneath the sun;
Yea, smile, and as a golden web is spun
Of sunshine, believe with me it doth avail
That Hallowed Cross there was and Holy Grail
So men may live and God's good will be done.

May thou see nymphs and merry satyrs prance,
And no black beast, when toiling by life's stream!
I hope as thou in magic ways doth peer
And play, thou'lt see the silver fairies dance
In the moonlit path of thy dazzling dream!
I greet thee with best wishes for the year!

CHRISTMAS—1921

At Christmastide on you a gift worth while
I would bestow. The day good deeds prevail,
Would you the hollied bowl of spiced wassail
Imbibe with me? Or happily beguile
The time with jewels from a coral isle?
Or like Sir Walter, the sweet fumes inhale
Of ripe old Burley? Or might posies frail
And rare bring to your kindly face a smile?

But no, I'll proffer this with all my heart!
The Wish to Smile right joyfully, my friend!
If this poor means attain such worthy end,
'Tis I of your largess will share a part.
Can you but smile when looking in their eyes,
Your fellows will such gift immortalize!

CHRISTMAS—1922

Again I sense the flight of Santa's sleigh,
The thud of dancing hoofs on icy tiles
As town to town they spurn the frosty miles,
Or arch from star to star their flashing way.
The mistletoe and holly and sweet bay,
The jumping-jacks and candies in great piles,—
I shake my cap and bells and join the smiles!—
"What gift need you?" did I hear some one say?

Is it largess I crave in gift or giving?
Is it the rainbow's hue or pot of gold?
Is it the chime that charms or silver bell?
Is it my life I love or is it living?
Sometimes 'tis this and sometimes that I hold,
But I need most that you should wish me well.

CHRISTMAS—1923

I ponder oft the festive joy I see
When temple bells are ringing and the thrill
Of Christmas permeates the winter's chill
With surges warm of generosity.

They celebrate the Christ Nativity?
Ah, yes! What impulse then may that distill
In you? I know not, nor what wish fulfill;
So let me tell you what it means to me.

It means I'm never lonely in my shack,
Though winter brawl beneath the Christmas skies;
A pageant of gay faces all the while
Parades before my mind and takes me back—
They have the gift of giving in their eyes;
And you are by my camp-fire and you smile.

CHRISTMAS—1924

Were wishes autos, beggars then might ride;
(A modern cynic may, the proverb, turn)
Yet wishing is a sport no one will spurn
And even kings may wish at Christmastide.
Old Croesus was a pauper when beside
His cash you pile my wishes and discern
The castles in the air where I sojourn;
And having much, with you I would divide.

I wish that you could see a snowy night
At Rossignol, from out my cabin door;
The glow within, and dancing on the floor
The memories, like elves, in the fire light.
I wish you retrospection that may cheer
And Merry Christmas and a fine New Year!

CHRISTMAS—1925

Though static mar the merry-making din
Which haply fills the air at Christmas time
And you are surfeited with song and chime
Or wassail from a golden cannikin,
I still may broadcast in the hope to win
A quiet place for this, my modest rhyme:—
I wish for you, as up the steep you climb,
When years tune out, may you each year tune in!

Although the Lakes of Rossignol are far
From hearth you honor with your Christmas cheer,
My own Yule Log will bring you very near
Though it should burn in gleam of distant star.
Thus, should I feast 'neath palm or snowy pine,
I trust the Guide may lead your trail to mine.

CHRISTMAS—1926

Like restless spirits years thus flicker by. . . .
It seems I had my breakfast New Year Day
In scented June, my lunch, with scant delay;
Now Christmas beckons me to goose and pie.
"All is not food that sparkles!" you may cry,
But Yuletide viands look so fine and gay,
A wee ache here and there but aids the play,
And that which gluts the paunch may fit the eye.

Spiritual fantasia may be,
But brawn it takes my swift canoe to speed
And lead to down the deer on which I feed.
(I'll trade two ghosts for one reality).
Good spirits thine! These are my Christmas wishes;
And while you quaff, may spirits wash the dishes!

THIS YULETIDE
1927

As pipe smoke weaves, I'll waft to you a song
In lieu of grasping your so ready hand:
Had I my way, true friends from all the land
Would gather at my board, so wide and strong,
While wit and flowing bowl the feast prolong
At Christmas time. Ay! Give to me a band
Of humans fraught with faults, who understand
There is a cosmic scheme and they belong.

I sing the man who smiles out on the river,
Or Rossignol, that lake of Micmac lure;
I sing the girl who finds the waters pure,
Nor wonders if they stop or go forever.

Why stammer over steeple, stole or styles
While friends there are and timber-templed aisles?

MERRIE CHRISTMAS—1928

Ensconced on fireside settle I recline
And doze and bid the driving blizzard howl,
Nor scarce awake at eerie hoot of owl
Or snap of frost within my logs of pine.
Contemptuous of life or timbered shrine
The storm roars on—and wraps with ghostly cowl
The sly trails where the summer woodfolk prowl
And alder swamps wherein the cow moose whine.

"Christmas is here!" I waken with a start;
An Elf springs out, a mouse-furred vagabond,
His cap in hand and hand upon his heart;
"Behold your friends!" he grins and waves his wand.

A cinema of faces then I see—
But yours bestirs my Yuletide memory!

Rhymed Philosophy

INTERLUDE

As I look down the avenue of years,
Palm-sheltered here, with there a brooding pine
Casting black shadows on this trail of mine,
I marvel at the weeds and pools of tears
And wonder if those ancient pioneers
Who blazed it for me had more shade than shine
Of sun to guide them toward that swift decline
I rush to reach, and reaching view with fears.

Not fear of Charon's craft nor dismal croon;
Only the inscrutable cosmic plan
Daunts me, lest trail beyond, by stalwarts hewn,
I miss, nor measure to the mail of man.
But there! The vista softens. Comrades call
A welcome to a feast in Odin's Hall!

AS JO KOSE, THE ROSSIGNOL GIDE, WOULD DO IT

Say, Pards, when I looks back along the trail
I've travelled goin' on nigh fifty year
And thinks upon the logs and rotten gear
I druve 'em with in cataract and gale,
I feels like a old boat with mildewed sail
And only a split oar with which to steer:
Yessir! some river skiff tied to a pier
That's safe, pervided you knows how to bail.

I wonders howinhel I has gut by
Without a wreck or losin' of my way,
And how I still can look 'em in the eye
When many a time a eye-lash saved the day.
But why look back when out ahead I see
A bunch of dang good buddies callin' me?

AN INDIAN'S IDEA OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

By storied lake I tinkered my old car
When Ma-tee-o, the Micmac, passed to view
The weather signs: for each sweet breeze that blew,
The sun and clouds, composed his calendar.
In sport I questioned him of things afar,
While he watched me drill out a twisted screw:—
"What of this League of Nations? Is it true
That President may smoke with King and Czar?"

"My fathers had a league: it was as dust,"
He said; "when instincts turned to greed and lust.
No men can sire braves from evil hearts,
Nor build a good machine with faulty parts."
Thus spake the shadow of an ancient race;
He coughed and passed—a wise light in his face.

THE COTTAGE

A thousand eager memories allay
The mundane worries as 'mid oak trees tall
I spy the cottage that a home for all
Has stood through joy and years by night and day.
Lovers beneath the moon's indulgent ray
There were, and babes, and fluffy pets to maul;
Parents, grannies, cousins and folk who call;
And some have passed, and some were wrenched away.

And in the portal now so fair to see,
My queenly sisters wave and make me glad;
Father greets son with high mistaken pride,
And they encourage me to boast of me.
As by the fire we chat of lass and lad,
I feel those others smiling at my side.

A FAIRY LAUGHS

A gilded bird within a golden cage!
In truth the bright free air beyond, it sees,
While I my pristine needs can scarce appease,
And stifle 'mid brick walls in sullen rage.

Betwixt a truant eye and ill-faced page
A delicate green tracery of trees
Intrudes and gently sways as from a breeze
Warm-spiced with clover, peppermint and sage.

Some wee thing taps the windows of my soul;
It taps a gentle code as though to friend;
My mind is crooked to clutch its daily dole,
So dully grasps but fails to comprehend,
Till something bids my frown to casement rise,
And there a Fairy laughs straight in my eyes!

TO A FRIEND

Si Diis Placet

I met along the trail one winter's day
A hunter brave with sweat upon his brow,
And pack so heavy that it made him bow;
'Till him I met I'd cursed the rocky way.
His eyes were pained; I saw him strain and sway.
I spoke: "Good Sir, my help, will you allow?
Your pack is bulkier than mine, I vow."
He braced himself and smiled, and gestured, "Nay.
No sympathy I crave. I must decline;
But your respect I cherish more than gold;
So let us each his burden strongly hold.
You carry your own pack and leave me mine."

He stoutly passed. Beyond the forest shade
I heard him laugh at welts the pack-strap made.

TO THE WORLD PACIFISTS

Ambition ever helped man in his stride;
Though not achieved, possessing it, he won;
Endeavoring to fly he learned to run,
And emulating Centaurs did he ride.
He swam because he craved the waves to glide;
And failing bolts of Jove, he built a gun;
Thus, silken pelt he coveted, so spun
The wool and flax and gold cloth for his bride.

He raised a tower tall to reach the sky,
Then found within himself the heaven he sought;
With skill thus gained he since has wisely wrought,
And longing for the stars he learned to fly.

So point your arrow up and, mayhap, soon,
In aiming for the sun you'll nick the moon!

A TOAST TO THE PLAYERS

A toast, Comrades! Ye wielders of the pen!
Just kiss the cup and pledge it from the heart!
Thy pens are stout but there be other art
More versatile of which we little ken.
Ye dare deny? What of the Players, then—
Those genii who the smile or tear can start?
Man in his time may play a varied part,
But Players play the parts of many men.

So come, a pledge, I say, to mimicry!
To artists who invoking Heaven, the jeers
Of gallery-gods may bear, and still not mar
The play for more discerning sympathy;
Who, laughing, may not weep though moved to tears,
Nor stay the cosmic setting of a star.

QUESTING

Singing I gazed at an azure sky;
A great Thought arrowed waywardly,
Winging its way beyond the blue:
Its fate sought it right hungrily.

Preaching, I tried in unctious mood
The soul to shrive by theurgy;
Teaching the prayer of orthodox,
The goal receded mystically.

Yearning, I glimpsed a fleeting light:
Too weak to grasp convincingly;
Learning at last the Goal was just
To seek, though not discerningly.

PITHECANTHROPUS—THE JAVA APE-MAN

Before entombed in storied rocks, his race
O'erran the Trinil land of gentle clime;
Of shaggy mien, erect he walked, sublime;
No Simian he,—yet with prehuman face
Expressed his joy or anger with grimace;
He knew no fire, nor subterfuge, nor crime;
With eolith he slew beasts of his time,
And lived by right of might and Nature's grace.

Mayhap the spirits of the Pleistocene
The efforts of our sages will deride
As they exhume a skull or femur lean
To herald and parade with ghoulish pride;—
For Ape-men like the modern wisemen keen
Just strove and ate, and laughed and loved,—and died.

INSPIRATION

O, ladye faire and belted knight of arms
Parading past the window of my mind;
The jungles, and the icebergs, and the wind
Of scorched Sahara, and the verdant palms,
The salt sea waves, and earthquakes' vast alarms,
A holocaust, an engines whirr and grind,
A boy, a girl, a beast, a mother kind:—
A cinema that challenges and charms.

I'm surfeited with rich abundant lore,
Yet loricated by a sluggish brain,
The mixture will not fuse nor yet avail
To link or fit in plot or metaphor,
Till white-hot inspiration welds a chain
Of fancy that creates a wondrous tale !

WERE T'OTHER DEAR CHARMER AWAY

My country! Southern land where I was born;
With sunlit pastures and assuasive air;
Its scintillating cities with their rare
Exotic arts and graces that adorn
Each conclave of the Muses,—I bemourn
The duties that impelled me far from there;—
Its Star Be-spangled Banner, rippling, fair,
Still waves in freedom, e'en though battle-torn!

Yet, having quaffed the philter of the snow
And harked the pibrock of the westing Scot,
Beheld the Habitant and Micmac Band,
And scented spruce and seen the torrents flow,
And made true friends,—I'll gladly cast my lot
With Canada: I'll grasp her proffered hand!

THE WELL AT GRAND PRÉ

Long years ago a Norman peasant came
In Acadie to live, or so 'tis sung,
(Meg-am-a-gee 'twas called in Micmac tongue)
And builded him a cote; nor seeking fame
Nor glory, dug a well, that man or dame
Or fair Evangeline, so blithe and young,
Could draw cool water by the pail that swung
From willow sweep, a-nodding in its frame.

The farmer builded better than he knew;
As fashioning the rustic curb of stone,
Or oaken bucket, how could he foretell
That from his handiwork there would ensue
Such fame of storied song, so rich in tone,
That half the world, athirst, would seek his well?

A TOAST—IN MEMORIAM

Gentlemen rise, to this toast in rhyme!
We have lost a pal before her time;
Steadfast to friends, a heart true-blue,—
The best little sport we ever knew;—
Here's to you, Lu!

Her mother was first in every thought;
Her friends came next: to them she brought
A dazzling smile and a witty quip;
Wished nought for herself but a hearty grip,
And Life's cup to sip.

Honest herself and unafraid,
She sat in a game where the Reaper played,—
Played her last hand,—a crooked deal,—
Which the Reaper dealt, her fate to seal;
She didn't squeal.

As the Great Adventure wafts her away
To the Golden Gate, to Saint Peter she'll say:—
"Hello, Pete, Old Top, will you let me through?"
From Pete:—"We're looking for girls like you,—
Come on in, Lu!"

IMMORTALITY (?)

Whence springs the postulate of immortality?
Motive low, as self-seeking egotist?
(Hence wings for angels or horns for deviltry!)
To live, as self, forever to exist?

The postulate may spring from motives worthy,
Conceived by psychic ever-groping man
To dominate his earthly life: who wisely
Perceived the basic good in Cosmic Plan.

A CAMP-FIRE TOAST

(In Memoriam T. R.)

Gentlemen up! while we drink a toast
To a Hunter from mountain, desert and coast;
A true-blue sport, whose life has sped,
Where better hunting will greet his lead;
Here's to you, Ted!

Blessed with a heart as warm as the sun,
Quick on the trigger, but full of fun,
Strong as an oak, straight as a line;
He met defeat without a whine;
Our hearts repine.

The Pipe of Peace or his Hat in the Ring,—
'Twas the same to him,—he had his fling,
And set a standard true and fair
For American men who do and dare;
Rugged and square!

No molly-coddle could follow the trail
He blazed, nor quitters nor pikers frail;
From Seat of Power or cow-pony's back,
He'd give you a lift with part of your pack;
Nor courtesy lack.

He's gone to the Happy Hunting Ground,
With Old Guide Peter to show him 'round;
As under the stars, our blankets spread,
We invoke his spirit to guard our bed;
We toast you, Ted!

CHRISTENDOM

Chaos had reigned, while human eras passed;
Man worshipped idols, craving an ideal
No earthly gods could conjure for his zeal;
The truth for him, a vague idea too vast.
Idolator, destined to stare aghast
At death, he was, and in confusion kneel
Until the Star of Bethlehem reveal
The dawn of Christ, the great iconoclast.

False idols fell, and with the hallowed birth
Came love to lighten grief and leaven fears;
Imaged as man, and by men sacrificed,
The Magic of the manger swept the earth.

The world grows sweeter as that sandaled Christ
With eyes ablaze strides towering down the years.

THE WAKE

Alert I chose to try the wings of life:
Through cloud and sun and stars I hurled at speed!
On Pegasus I dared to spur the steed
To leap to dizzy heights and dangers rife;
Astride a dragon black I joined the strife
To halt the spectre of most dreadful need,
And snatch from others with primordial greed,
A loaf, a robe, a couch, a nod,—a wife.

As on the good ship's rail in thought I lean
To scan the silver wake that lies astern,—
A spotless trail of work well done and sure,—
And see the gulls like angels, white and pure,
That soaring watch as though our course to learn,—
I pray my trail may be as straight and clean!

AN INVITATION TO MARS

Ho! Men of Mars! your firmament we scan
With daring eyes, and wonder if perchance
Your star is like to ours. Do daisies dance
In summer winds to pipes of merry Pan?
Are there great temples for the Martian man,
And fetes, and song, and nymphs of ardent glance?
And do you live in cave or sunny manse?
To know, must *we* the cold blue ether span?

The ruddy face of such a brilliant star
Denotes a hospitality of sorts:
As though you lived and thrived in the bright glare
Of sun, and welcomed others from afar.
But we invite you to *our* homes and courts:—
Bridge ye the space you beckon us to dare!

ICARUS

Ephemeral Atom painted on the blue
Far distant canvas of the morning sky!
It seems in flight and thus intrigues the eye,—
Looms quickly larger,—but to dip from view
In fleecy cloudlets formed by sun-touched dew;
From whence it darts, its size to magnify
An hundred-fold; we only then descry
A wingéd man who would a star-trail hew.

He soars! He loops-the-loop in ecstasy!
A tail-spin! Then, a nose-dive to the ground,—
Not yet! He flattens; and, as drifting froth,
He skims and lights; and, then derisively,
He blows a wisp of smoke, and grins around;—
And lo! His wings are fragile as a moth!

MOTHERHOOD

To thwart good Nature's laws in wisdom planned
Is but to shirk and loaf with vision dim,
Forswearing duty to the race with prim
False modesty, or "ideals" that are grand
As an excuse for flouting God's command;
Just like the dunce who sat upon a limb
And sawed it off between the tree and him,
Unthinking of the place where he would land.

To fly about and set the stars to rights
Is quite a task for wings Icarian,
Attached to one who tries to reach the sky,
Eschewing simple earth and its delights.
A sweeter toil it were to mother man,
And later take a gift of wings and fly.

SAND AND WATER

A drop of water sparkles on the ground,
Its path disputed by a grain of sand;—
"From me is formed the surging ocean grand!"
"And me He used to make the whole world round!"
"But I, when rippling, make a tinkling sound!"
"And I compose the seashore's yellow strand!"
"And I to cloud and silver mist expand!"
"In me bright jewels and red gold are found!"

Thus boast the idle atoms of a star,
Unheeding and unstirred by enterprise,
Till boundless zeal of *genus homo* drill
Them from their slothful beds;—and flung afar
As energy and concrete, bridle-wise,
Like giant pards, they chariot his will.

CREATION

Eons ago vast writhing masses flew
Athwart the void in hurtling disarray,
Like some Titanic cubist's mad display
If he in frenzied dream a picture drew;
Leviathans of gas,—they swelled and grew,—
Consuming other monsters in the way
Until they met in Jovian affray
Far greater clouds that no direction knew.

Yet in this infinite turmoil there crashed
And fused a hoard of atoms, knowing not
That 'twas a well blazed trail they blindly trod,
And in the fusing stars were born and flashed
To whirl in orbits to the rhythm hot
Of one great Vital Force we know as God!

ROBIN HOOD

(Alias Douglas Fairbanks)

A Templar, high resolved, strides forth to sing
Of maidens fair and England's day of might;
We gaze with awe on castle, joust and Knight
And Lincoln-green and shaft of grey goose wing;
We jeer the gross ill-manners of a King,
Then laud his prowess as his staff doth smite
A lusty Friar in a Sherwood fight;
And statecraft hath a most familiar ring.

The magic of stout Albion's Heraldry!
Hot fusing of the Anglo-Saxon race,
When Robin's men held fast its hard won place
As arbiter of worth and liberty!
From Saxon, Dane and Scot the race was spawned. . .
And now a Yankee Douglas waves the wand!

AFTER READING THOMPSON'S ESSAY ON SHELLEY

He conjures up star-trimmed Olympic toys
Wrought from the fabric of a Universe,
Created only that they might immerse
In ecstasies the souls of Delphic boys.
What magic tricks are these, expressing joys
And pretense? Ah! There is a sun-filled purse,
And here is Aphrodite dressed to nurse
The Twins; and Dian now the Swan decoys!

The luminous imagery of his prose
Is poetry surpassing Shelley's best:
He snatched a piece from sunset-reddened skies
And flagged a comet,—mounted and arose
To chase the angels in his headlong quest,—
For they to him were golden butterflies.

BROADWAY

Like ants that strive for sugar on the floor,
Of tiny rushing Things I see a throng,
All squeaking as they shove their way along,
Each fancies it alone creates the roar.
This trail of stinking cab and mounting score,
This mart of human nonsense with its song
Of hokum, soak 'em, rouge and brazen gong,
Is like a gaming-house with bolted door.

Around, around, the frenzied inmates teem,
As sweating, cheating, hot, they win and fail:
One mind, one soul, is scattered 'mongst them all.
For speed, I'd choose a wind-swept rapid stream,
And hemlocks, rich, to kindly pad my trail;
For noise,—bold Aspotogan's water-fall.

A CANADIAN LUMBERMAN ON FIFTH AVENUE

As on a log I ride the surging sluice:
A-top a bus that ponderously works
And winds its way with urgent bumps and jerks,
Then darts ahead freed from the eddies' noose;
And now the cars are jammed like logs of spruce
On my old stream; but in the current lurks
A traffic lumber-jack who knows its quirks:
He nods! The drive moves on swiftly and loose.

I feel as but one tiny drop of blood
Spilled in the roaring rapids of the world.
Do they surmise why they through space are hurled,—
These throngs that plod the bank, with eyes in mud?
Are Jew and Gentile, Prince and Vagabond
But seeking out a trail to the Beyond?

WAMBA THE FOOL

The Northern Bard depicts proud squire and dame,
Brave archers, priests, and kings in all their might,
The panoply of war and heralds bright,
Escutcheons and device; the tilting game
For men of iron, fierce with eyes aflame,
Careering at grim death in mad delight,
That lady's smile award their dazzling flight,
Or gracious sob deplore their fall from fame.

Grand people all and souls of chivalry!
But who advised the king and sought no place?
Who risked his life to save a friend his lass?
Who served, nor judged, and gazed to Calvary,
And won the lists without a lance or mace?
'Twas Wamba,—with the jawbone of an ass!

I YEARN THE MUSES

I yearn the Muses of Olympus' Hall;
I would invoke Apollo might he deign
To vest in me a skill I dare attain
To make a beggar smile, or queen, my thrall.
Could I but charm sly Pan and Dryads all,
In sylvan dells I'd play and ever reign
As Prince of Merriment and Glad Refrain:
I would I were a magic rossignol!

Not that I wish the majesty of might,
Nor yet the fealty of equal souls,
Nor even poor man's pay, or rich man's doles;
To create happiness I crave the right.
I feel the phrase but cannot reach the note.
O, that I had a skylark's golden throat!

THE VIMY MEMORIAL MONUMENT

Beyond the emerald, pale mist I see:
Contoured to drape the mantles of the field,
The tender breasts of hills are there revealed
In fullness of the peasant husbandry;
And sky as blue as only sky can be
In sunny France. 'Twas here the sword to wield
In red defence that brothers stood to shield
From raping Hun both home and family.
And there on distant hill-top seem to sway
Two shining spirits brooding o'er the fate
Of those who tossed the Torch and broke the lance

The spirits pass. My lips unbidden pray;
Two Pylons stand, like nuns, to dedicate
The Brotherhood of Canada and France.

THE IMMIGRANT

From tribesmen bred who in a time were great:
Who had their Alexanders and their Czars,
Their Cleopatra, Doges, and their Shahs;
They seek our land to better their estate:
From countries ravaged by a Kaiser's hate,
And kingdoms taxed by gun and scimitar,
They hail our flying banner from afar,
And sanctuary find within our gate.

They come in hope; we turn them not away;
Yet harbored in this motley human blend
Is dirk and bomb and lust,—and devil's thrall
Who, sapient with doctrines of decay,
Would tear down what he does not comprehend.
And Liberty still stands to welcome all!

PROMISE

I prithee dwell not on the turgid pools
And mud-roiled shallows of the year now past:
The year that like a stream its flotsam cast
Upon the rocks, or whirled as useless tools
In sad review its blind, its halt, its fools,
In never ending eddies to the last;
Curse not the stones that made thee stand aghast
When thou asked bread of one of these new "Schools

Look forward, brother! There a light will shine
For thee, and mayhap, this glad day is born
The chance to use mistakes that thou didst dare
As guides to a success most justly thine:
The future bright! And may thy sins forlorn
Of yesteryear turn all to jewels rare!

FIRE

A-sputtering and pouring up the chimney
In glee the fire gobbles up the logs;
Although the murky night is wet and windy,
The fuel burns the brighter on the dogs.
(I wonder if the flame still flickers just the same
As when it scorched the Micmac on the bogs?)

Hot curling tongues are licking up the birch-bark,
Puffing little tenticles of smoke;
It tosses tiny hand-grenades of red spark,—
Shoots up pretty rockets when I poke.
(I wonder if such heat made fierce old Huns retreat
When burning Belgian babies for a joke!)

Now belching smoke and flaring to the dark night,
Throwing mystic shadows as they slip
Up through the yawning gullet in their swift flight,—
The flames pretend to frolic as they dip.
(I wonder how 'twould be if one were out at sea
And heard them roaring skyward from the ship?)

Careering and high-leaping in the fireplace,
Darting tongues are striving hard to lave
With hot destructive fluid every brick-face,—
Fierce at their confinement, hiss and rave.
(I wonder did it play in that far ancient day
When it warmed old Pithecanthropus's cave?)

The fire died.—I watched the ashes blowing
Little red-hot showers as they fell;—
Gazed deeply into embers softly glowing;
Then the church clock tolled the midnight bell.—
(I wonder at the plan for making any man
Live here awhile, then die,—and go to Hell.)

THE RAINBOW

I hunted for the Pot of Gold,
And by a wraith was kissed;
The treasure trove I tried to hold,
And grasped but tinted mist.

I spied a pool beneath a tree—
A shining silver birch——
Old Glooscap there smiled up at me:
"The thrill is in the search."

BALANCE

A surplus here and there a dearth,
The joy of love, the pain of birth,
The heat of youth, the cold of death,
The winter frost, then Spring's sweet breath;

First callowness then wise old age:
For every fool we find a sage.
We meet with nerve the testing Fates,
And happiness predominates!

GOLDEN SLIPPERS

(A Negro Spiritual)

"Dem golden slippers" sing a song of hope;
Those simple Afric children of the sun
Are not alone by "spirituals" won;
I too,—and thou, perchance?—for comfort grope.
That melody was not prescribed by pope
Or priest as balm for laity or nun;
But from such lilting notes are anthems spun
That flout those hymns which limit psychic scope.

"Dem golden slippers" opens wide a door
To limitless imaginings of mind
Which on such "golden stairs" to stars have climbed—
(No soul, denying sentiment, may soar).
Dance on, dear folk, with spirit-wingéd feet,
Nor wait that *tout ensemble* of "golden street".

THE PROSPECTOR

(In answer to Helen Coleman's Sonnet expressing pity for same)

Serrate against the blue, the snow caps gleam,
And daring, ever call out to his soul;
So hence he toils and gladly pays the toll
Imposed by guardians of reef and stream;
Those altitudes and storms which bar and seem
But to create a zest to reach the goal.
He scales the peaks to burrow like a mole
In cliffs no vaster than his golden dream.

Thus the Prospector: one who gives his all
To find a rainbow and its pot of gold,
Or mayhap dross for which a star is sold. . .
And win or lose, he wins,—harks he the call.
No arid waste *his* mind: he had his flight
And visions unattained by urbanite.

THE OPTIMIST

The world is for the optimist, and he
Looks forward to the good in everything:
He smiles at narrow cults which numb and bring
But bondage to the minds that should be free;
Though oft he stumble he yet tries to be
Constructive in his swift recovering,
Nor takes supinely what the Fates may fling;
Yet harkens to that Sage of Galilee:
"Neither do I condemn thee——sin no more——"
The words of One with faith in all mankind,
That Superman of all-embracing mind
Would not condemn!—to hope flung wide the door;
From persecution bade he them desist:
He was the great constructive Optimist.

EFFKABEE

(Translated from an old Chinese manuscript)

Effkabee, fearful of a past misdeed,
Fled to the coast and sought by craft and stealth,
With smirk and smile and flaunted vulgar wealth
To captivate the natives, then proceed
To filch their lands and bamboo, and indeed
While clutching at their very commonwealth,
He'd dine with them and falsely drink their health
Professing faith in every cult and creed.

Pomposity and bluff his only staff,
His tottering morale dragged at his soul;
On temple days in terror he would crawl
(Though seemingly he marched with strut and laugh)
And try to bribe with treasure that he stole,
False gods, destined to lure him to his fall.

THE CHAMPION

Applause like a barrage the Champion hails.
Deep from the amphitheatre's writhing slopes
It rolls. A superman glides through the ropes—
The mightiest of many fighting males!
The throng, sophisticated, all details
Observe. Breathless, they weigh their fears and hopes
As man shakes hand of man with whom he copes,
And neither one before the other quails.

Time! A flash of brawn and a blotch of blood!
Round after round they mill! A click! A thud!
The Master smiles (it was a cunning thrust),
Then stoops to lift his rival from the dust.
Brutal? But no! He played a brilliant part
And genius is acclaimed in every art.

SING SING PRISON

I trudged the swales, my dragging feet like lead;
The sun poured down a cold and garish light
Upon a hard world ruled by gold and might:
(My sonnets did not fit their plans, they said.)
But on I plunged, my shadow stalked ahead,
Unheeding my despair and sorry plight.
The trees were stark; the birds took silly fright;
The mud sucked greedily; my hopes were dead.

And thus I topped a hill and saw the blue
Expanse of the Hudson's generous sweep;
And there I spied a place of death and stealth:
A prison, guarded,walled, with donjon deep;
Its barred wings spread to hatch its devil's crew;
'Twas then I found in freedom wondrous wealth.

TO MARSHALL THE MODEST POET

O, Poet of sweet Acadie, why fear
That thy rich verse which shines in worthiness,
Though wrought in modesty and gentle dress,
Is not of tone to tempt a stranger's ear?
The stanza and its measure is a mere
Conveyance for thy reverent caress
Of song, composed when 'neath a fervid stress
Of yearning spirit, yet with vision clear.

Thy travelled mind doth blend Venetian art
With Brookfield's peaceful pictures, and has stored
Much worldly-wise philosophy that tunes
Responsive to thy brother's eager heart.
Thy verse will live! Inspired, thy pen has scored
Full deep the grace of those immortal runes!

INDEX

Page

Rossignol 5

THE VOICE OF THE FOREST

A Sport 11
A Winter Sunrise 31
A Vernal Painting 12
Camping 24
Drifting 28
Indian Gardens 19
Lake Rossignol, Nova Scotia 36
Meskuk M'Taskum 10
My Autumn Mistress 17
November Snow 18
October Morn 34
Shooting the Rapids 26
The Camp Fireplace 13
The Fallen Monarch 21
The Fibre of a Thousand Tongues 23
The Freshet 30
The Game I Love 14
The Granite Boulder 35
The Python 25
The Rape of the Forest 16
The Rapids 27
The Smugglers' Trail 29
The Sprite of Spring 15
The Storm 32
The Tryst 22
The Water-Lily 33
Trouting 20
Voices of the Spruce 9

CHERCHEZ LA FEMME

A Song 52
A Sonnet Lady 40
Conscience 50

Page

Did Ever You Stand by a Brook 46
Girl of my Heart 48
Heathen to Christian 41
Memory 44
"Phileen" 39
Starry Eyes 49
The Burning Glacier 45
The Flame of Norway 43
The Sub-Deb 47
To the Hospitable Frances Starr 51
Wolves 42

WAR

Balm O'Gilead 57
Ships of Peace 59
Socks 58
The Pathos of Peace 56
To the War Poets 55

THE SEA

A Poet by the Sea 75
Chantey of The Grand Banks 66
Reincarnation 74
Rockaway Beach in January 65
Surf 69
The Beach in Winter 71
The Clipper 77
The Derelict 73
The Fisherman 63
The Hurricane 68
The Launching of the Bluenose 72
The Plaint of the Mayflower 76
The Surf Rider 64
Upon Driving an Auto Among the Ice-Bound Fishing Vessels on the LaHave River 70

BURLESQUE

A Flapper Flopped 100
After Reading Shakespeare's 154th Sonnet 103
A Lassie Loves the Sailors 94

Page
And There You Are! 97
Anything Can Happen in the Woods 84
Canoeing in Florida 95
Cash 104
Erin Go Bragh 86
Fractured Resolutions 90
Green-itch Village 102
Hunger 101
In Florida 93
Instinct 91
I Sold My Dog 92
Lenine-Trotsky, etc 96
Lo! The Poor Artist 89
Pan-Dean Song 81
Plane Jo Kose the Gide of Rossignaw 85
Reincarnation 83
Reply to John Haynes Holmes 98
Soviet-Catabasis 82
To Byng of Vimy 99
To my Lady's 'Ighbrow 88
The Owls' Nest 87

YULETIDE

Christmas, 1920 108
Christmas, 1921 109
Christmas, 1922 110
Christmas, 1923 111
Christmas, 1924 112
Christmas, 1925 113
Christmas, 1926 114
Merrie Christmas, 1928 116
Off with the Old and On with the New 107
This Yuletide, 1927 115

RHYMED PHILOSOPHY

A Camp-Fire Toast 134
A Canadian Lumber-man on Fifth Avenue 145
A Fairy Laughs 123
After Reading Thompson's Essay on Shelley 143
An Indian's Idea of the Legaue of Nations 121

Page
An Invitation to Mars....137
As Jo Kose, the Rossignol Gide, Would Do It....120
A Toast—In Memoriam....132
A Toast to the Players....126
Balance....153
Broadway....144
Christendom....135
Creation....141
Effkabee....157
Fire....151
Golden Slippers....154
Icarus....138
Immortality (?)....133
Inspiration....129
Interlude....119
I Yearn the Muses....147
Motherhood....139
Pithecanthropus, the Java Ape-Man....128
Promise....149
Questing....127
Robin Hood....142
Sand and Water....140
Sing Sing Prison....159
The Champion....158
The Cottage....122
The Immigrant....150
The Optimist....156
The Prospector....155
The Rainbow....152
The Vimy Memorial Monument....148
The Wake....136
The Well at Grand Pré....131
To a Friend....124
To Marshall, the Modest Poet....160
To the World Pacifists....125
Wamba the Fool....146
Were T'Other Dear Charmer Away....130

Date Due

CAT. NO. 23 233 PRINTED IN U.S.A.

TRENT UNIVERSITY
0 1164 0014984 9

PS8525 .066R6

Moore, Philip Hooper
Rossignol rhymes

DATE	ISSUED TO
	152429

152429